

Background

At the September Board meeting staff briefly touched on our efforts to provide funding-related assistance to our partners in the Region, particularly during the unfortunate bond freeze. This staff report offers the Board a bit more detail about our efforts to attract more investment and resources to the Sierra, as these efforts form a very important part of our program and provide us an opportunity to add value to our partners in the Region beyond just our grants program.

Our other funding activities link directly to two key areas in the SNC Strategic Plan: Organizational Goal 3 – Increase knowledge and capacity in the Region, and Organizational Goal 5 – Identify funding needs in the Region. Strategy 3.2, for example, calls for the SNC to work with communities to meet their technological, communication and technical assistance needs, while Strategy 5.2 calls for us to identify and communicate potential funding sources to those engaged in project activities consistent with the SNC's mission.

Current Status

Earlier this year the SNC Funding and Resource Development Coordinator, Marji Feliz began regularly providing information on our Web site and directly to interested individuals and organizations regarding outside funding opportunities, workshops, and resources (primarily from other State agencies, federal agencies, and some private foundations, emerging technology funds and other groups). Feliz uses a variety of sources to identify potential funding opportunities and conducts necessary analysis to determine applicability to the SNC and its stakeholders. Chosen opportunities reflect either the SNC's mission statement and/or one of its seven program areas. Opportunities meeting these and certain other criteria related to timing and deadlines are posted on the SNC's [Current Funding Opportunities](#) (CFO) web page twice a month. A week-long announcement of the update is posted on the home page at the same time so that any new visitors to our site can have easy access to the information.

Email notification is subsequently sent out to more than 1,000 organizations and other interested parties, including 140 people who have signed up over the past six months to be on a funding specific SNC mailing list. At the same time, Feliz emails all SNC staff with more detailed information on each opportunity so they can use that information as they make contacts throughout the Region and interact with grant recipients and applicants. Since January the SNC has publicized over 180 funding resources through these mechanisms. Feedback on this service, primarily in the form of email and verbal comments, has been consistently positive.

SNC staff has also recently expanded its efforts to seek potential funding streams and additional resources to expand and sustain the SNC's own work throughout the Region. For example, staff researched funding opportunities tailored to specific efforts, such as the Amador Calaveras Consensus group and the Geotourism project; they developed

and distributed a list of funding sources pertinent to participants in the SNC's recent "Connect the Dots" symposium; and they are currently looking for potential funding sources to begin implementing portions of the SNC's Climate Action Plan once it is approved.

Certain funding opportunities may be appropriate for the SNC to apply for itself to advance its own mission, or as a way to distribute additional funding throughout the Region through the use of sub-grants or other means. Some opportunities may lend themselves to SNC partnership with other organizations. For opportunities showing promise for these purposes, Program Staff develop a funding opportunity report and present recommendations and information intended to facilitate the management team's arrival at a pursue/don't pursue decision.

Next Steps

In an effort to be as strategic as possible, and in recognition of the fact that we have limited staff resources to support the Funding and Resource Development Program at the moment, we are focusing our immediate efforts on seeking funds for SNC's Sustainability and Climate Change initiatives, as well as for specific SNC project needs, such as System Indicators. In terms of external funding activities, Marji Feliz will continue researching and providing funding and technical assistance information to interested stakeholders through the Current Funding Opportunities outreach.

SNC staff is also securing services to assist our government and NGO partners in the Region compete more successfully for available funding, including providing grant writing assistance and training.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no action is needed by the Board at this time. However, staff would welcome any comments or direction for further action.